

Request for Proposals (RFP)

For Hiring a Consultancy Firm for Third-Party Assessment of Government Initiatives on Implementation of a Cashless Economy in Pakistan

Issued by: Ministry of Information Technology and Telecommunication, Government of Pakistan

Issue Date: 01.11.25

Submission Deadline: 21.11.25

I. Background

1. The Government of Pakistan has launched an ambitious national initiative to transition government systems and the broader economy towards a cashless and digitally enabled framework. This strategic shift is anchored in a broader vision to promote transparency, increase financial inclusion, enhance public service delivery, and reduce leakages in government transactions.

2. Under the initiative a Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI) is to be established to enable shift from cash payments to digital payments in both the public and the private sector. This entails digitalization of services and enabling of digital payments through the RAAST rail. It also involves development of a data exchange layer and provision of single-sign-on facility to the citizens to enable country-wide accessibility of services through digital applications and digital payments through payment rails.

3. The cashless economy initiative includes enabling merchants across the country to accept and process digital payments. To this end various measures are being implemented including: deployment of QR Codes, reduction in duties on equipment used for payment processing, and lowering transaction fee for digital payments processed over RAAST (subsidizing the cost of acquisition for commercial acquirers).

4. The initiative also aims to facilitate expansion of digital infrastructure through measures that include bringing Right-Of-Way (ROW) charges to zero. The ROW fee is charged for grant of right-of-passage to telco firms laying optic fiber through housing societies, roads, railway lines etc. Under the initiative, and based on directives from the Prime Minister, these charges are being made zero across the country. Federal entities like Pakistan Railways, National Highway Authority (NHA), and Capital Development Authority (CDA) have already notified zero ROW charges. The respective provincial governments are also in the process of notifying no-charges for ROW. The

measure is aimed to help speed up the fiberization process thereby enhancing digital connectivity across the country .

5. The progress of cashless economy initiative is being overseen by the Prime Minister of Pakistan himself through periodic meetings. A steering committee has been constituted under the Prime Minister’s directives. Its work has been divided into the following three sub-committees:

- i. Sub-committee 1- on Digital Payments Innovation and Adoption
(chaired by Governor State Bank of Pakistan)
- ii. Sub-committee 2- on Development of Digital Public Infrastructure
(chaired by the Federal Minister of IT)
- iii. Sub-committee 3- on Digitization of Government Payments (G2P and P2G)
(chaired by Federal Secretary Finance Division)

6. The respective sub-committees perform their task in line with various output and outcome indicators like: the number of merchants active on digital payments, number of digital banking users, annual number of digital transactions, progress along the Digital Payments Index, percentage of financially included persons, gender gap in access to digital services, internet penetration across the country, number of digitally provided services, and percentage of government to person and person to government payments digitized.

7. Given the scale, complexity, and national importance of the initiative, the Government of Pakistan is seeking the services of a qualified consultancy firm, selected through international competitive bidding process, to conduct an independent review and audit of the initiative’s design, implementation, impact, and governance mechanisms.

8. As part of a two-stage procurement process, EOIs were invited from prospective firms through an open advertisement. Based on evaluation of firms that submitted the EOIs, now this Request for Proposals is being made to the respective qualifying firms. The firm selected after due process will conduct a comprehensive and independent assessment of the Government’s Cashless Economy initiative.

II. Objectives of the Assignment

The overall objective of this assignment is to assess the progress, efficiency, and effectiveness of the Government’s cashless economy initiative.

The selected firm will:

- a. Conduct a comprehensive and independent assessment of the federal government’s cashless economy initiative to determine whether it is moving in the right direction,

recommend improvements, and assess whether course correction has been made towards the desired results.

- b. Evaluate implementation status of various components of the cashless economy initiative.
- c. Assess the institutional arrangements, operational frameworks, governance mechanisms, coordination mechanisms, and stakeholder engagement.
- d. Identify challenges, bottlenecks, and capacity gaps in implementation.
- e. Provide of recommendations for strengthening policy design, implementation mechanisms, and monitoring frameworks.

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III. Scope of Work

The consultant shall be responsible for:

- a. *A Comprehensive Review of the Current Strategy for Achieving Cashless Economy*
 - i. Review the overall strategy adopted under the initiative for moving towards a cashless economy, to see if it is fit-for-purpose and identify any gaps in its design
 - ii. Assess if the goals/ targets envisaged are suitable, and achievable given the policy, regulatory, institutional and technological infrastructure currently available, and recommend any necessary changes required for meeting the desired goals.
 - iii. Assess any underlying barriers to adoption of digital payments, like lack of financial literacy, and whether these have been adequately addressed under the strategy
 - iv. Assess whether strategy adequately promotes inclusiveness with regard to gender, and regional and geographical distribution.
- b. *Validation of the Outcome/Output Indicators*
 - i. Assess whether the indicators identified for attaining desired results and incorporated into the dashboard of the initiative are aligned with the desired objectives
 - ii. Whether the respective indicators are sufficient, or if any indicators need to be added, modified or substituted
- c. *Assessment of Implementation Plans*
 - i. Evaluate the effectiveness of the oversight Committees related to:
 - a) Digital Payments Adoption and Innovation
 - b) Digital Public Infrastructure
 - c) Government Payments
 - ii. Review internal and external monitoring systems
 - iii. Assess the implementation plans of respective stakeholder entities to determine if these are on track
- d. *Recommendations*

- i. Actionable recommendations for ensuring effective and timely implementation of Cashless initiatives
- ii. Followup on recommended course correction within the scope of the ongoing initiative
- iii. Recommendations for scaling up and sustaining the initiative, policy reforms, incentive structures, and capacity-building measures.

IV. Deliverables

Deliverable	Purpose	Timeline
Inception Report		1 week
Initial Assessment Report	Assessment of current status of initiative and identification of gaps	6 weeks after inception
Interim Recommendatory Report	Recommendations for improvement and course correction where needed	4 weeks after initial assessment/gap-analysis
Second Assessment Report	Assessment of course-correction, and recommendations	8 weeks after interim report
Final Report	Expected/Actual Outcomes and recommendations for sustainability	5 weeks after second assessment report

V. Proposal Submission Requirements

Interested firms are invited to submit **technical and financial proposals** in separate sealed envelopes (or via the government's e-procurement portal), including:

Technical Proposal:

- Understanding of the assignment
- Methodology and work plan
- Team composition and CVs
- Relevant past experience (with references)
- Quality assurance

Financial Proposal:

- Detailed cost breakdown (professional fees, travel, data collection, workshops, taxes, etc.)
- Total bid amount in PKR

VI. Evaluation and Scoring Criteria

Proposals will be evaluated using a *Quality and Cost-Based Selection (QCBS)* method. The evaluation will comprise two stages:

1. *Technical Evaluation* (weighted at 80%)
2. *Financial Evaluation* (weighted at 20%)

Only firms obtaining *at least 70 points* in the *technical evaluation* will be considered for the financial evaluation.

1. Technical Evaluation (Total 100 points)

Main Criteria	Sub-Criteria	Maximum Score
1. Understanding of Assignment and Methodology		30
	a. Understanding of context, objectives, and scope	10
	b. Methodological approach	10
	c. Innovation and analytical rigor	10
2. Relevant Experience of Firm		20
	a. International experience in similar assignments	10
	b. Experience with public sector and multilateral clients	5
	c. International experience on similar assignments in South Asia	5
3. Qualifications and Experience of Team		25
	a. Team Leader / Project Director	5
	b. Digital Payments / Fintech Expert	5
	c. Economist / Financial Inclusion Specialist	5
	d. ICT Infrastructure / Data Systems Specialist	5
	e. M&E /Evaluation Expert	5
4. Work Plan and Implementation Arrangements		10
	a. Realistic and detailed work plan with timelines	5
	b. Quality assurance, supervision, and coordination mechanisms	5

5. Presentation and Responsiveness		15
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Total Technical Score: 100 points
Minimum Passing Score: 70 points

2. Financial Evaluation (20% Weightage)

The financial proposals will be opened only for firms that score ≥ 70 in the technical evaluation.

The lowest-priced financial proposal (L_1) will receive the **maximum financial score (100 points)**.

Scores for other proposals will be calculated as:

$$\text{Financial Score (Sf)} = 100 \times (L_1 / L)$$

Where:

- L_1 = Lowest evaluated price
 - L = Price of the proposal being evaluated
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3. Combined Final Score

The final score will be computed as:

$$\text{Final Score} = (St \times 0.8) + (Sf \times 0.2)$$

Where:

- St = Technical Score
- Sf = Financial Score

The firm achieving the highest combined score will be recommended for award, subject to contract negotiations.

VII. Administrative Information

- **Contract Duration:** 06 months (extendable)

Type of Contract: deliverables-based

- **Supervising Agency:** Ministry of Information Technology and Telecommunication, Government of Pakistan
- **Funding Source:** Government of Pakistan

All proposals must be submitted to:

Muhammad Asad

Section Officer (IT), Ministry of Information Technology and Telecommunication

Room No. 7211, 7th Floor, Kohsar Block, Pak. Secretariat, Islamabad

Email: so.it@moitt.gov.pk

Deadline: 21st November, 2025; 1200 PM

9. Confidentiality and Ownership

All data, reports, and information collected or generated during the assignment shall remain the property of the Government of Pakistan. The firm shall maintain strict confidentiality and shall not disclose any information without prior written consent.

10. Conflict of Interest

Any bidder active in financial and payments eco-system of the country with potential conflict of interest in carrying out the stated scope of the project shall exercise full disclosure of the same to enable appropriate decision on eligibility. Conflict of Interest established based on disclosure or so assessed by the evaluation team shall render the bidder ineligible for the assignment under this RFP.

11. Right to Reject

The Government of Pakistan reserves the right to reject any or all proposals without assigning any reason.